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President: Mr. Han ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

The President: The General Assembly, in accordance with the decision taken at its 3rd plenary meeting on 19 September 2001, will begin its consideration of agenda item 10, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization".

I give the floor to the Secretary-General to give a brief presentation of his annual report.

The Secretary-General: Two weeks ago, as all representatives will remember, we were looking forward to this day, as the day when we would begin our general debate. Many members expected to be represented here by their head of State or Government or by their foreign minister.

I myself had hoped to set out what I see as the main priorities for our work for the next five years. Alas, that was two weeks ago. Thirteen days ago, on a day none of us is likely to forget, our host country and our beloved host city were struck by a blow so deliberate, heartless, malicious and destructive, that we are all still struggling to grasp its enormity.

In truth, this was a blow, not against one city or one country, but against all of us. It was an attack not only on our innocent fellow citizens — over 60 Member States were affected, including, I am sad to say, my own country — but on our shared values. It struck at everything this Organization stands for: peace, freedom, tolerance, human rights and the very idea of a united human family. It struck at all our efforts to create a true international society, based on the rule of law.

Let us respond by reaffirming, with all our strength, our common humanity and the values that we share. We shall not allow them to be overthrown. On the very day after the onslaught, the Security Council rightly identified it as a threat to international peace and security. Let us therefore respond to it in a way that strengthens international peace and security, by cementing the ties among nations and not subjecting them to new strains. This Organization is the natural forum in which to build such a universal coalition. It alone can give global legitimacy to the long-term struggle against terrorism.

On that same day — 12 September — your Assembly, Mr. President, in resolution 56/1, called for urgent action to enhance international cooperation and to prevent and eradicate acts of terrorism. I welcome that resolution, as well as the Assembly's decision to address the scourge of terrorism in greater detail next week. Among other things, that will be an occasion to stress the urgency of ratifying, and above all implementing, the existing conventions on international terrorism, and to consider agreeing on new instruments to combat this heinous crime.

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The need for a vigorous response to terrorism, and for a sustained, comprehensive strategy to defeat it, is not in doubt. But we also need to give greater urgency to our humanitarian task of relieving the victims of conflict and starvation, especially, at this time, those displaced from their homes in Afghanistan.

The attack of 11 September was also an attack on the freedom of human beings to travel, to exchange goods and services — everything a world trade centre stands for — and to exchange ideas.

Some commentators have rushed to assert that this confirms the dismal thesis of an inevitable clash of civilizations, according to which we face a century of conflict between people of different faiths and cultures. Let us affirm the opposite. Let us recall that the Assembly has proclaimed this year the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

Let us reassert the freedom of people from every faith and culture to meet and mingle and to exchange ideas and knowledge, in mutual respect and tolerance — to their mutual benefit and the benefit of all mankind.

Finally, the attack of 11 September was an attack on the rule of law — that is, on the very principle that enables nations and individuals to live together in peace by following agreed rules and settling their disputes through agreed procedures.

So let us respond by reaffirming the rule of law at the international and the national level.

No effort should be spared in bringing the perpetrators to justice in a clear and transparent process that all can understand and accept. Let us uphold our own principles and standards, so that we can make the difference unmistakable, for all the world to see, between those who resort to terrorism and those who fight against it.

Responding appropriately to this vicious onslaught is indeed a vital task. But we must not let it distract us from the rest of the work we have to do. In no way do these tragic events make the broader mission of the United Nations less relevant. On the contrary — and especially if we allow them to succeed in tipping the world economy into recession — these events will make that mission even more urgent.

Let us not respond to economic uncertainty in a way that is sure to make it worse, by seeking to protect national markets against free exchange. Instead, as we prepare for the meeting of the World Trade Organization in Doha, let us strengthen our international trading system and make sure that its benefits are available to all, especially the developing countries.

International cooperation is needed now more than ever in managing the world economy and in ensuring that the costs of adjustment do not once again fall most heavily on developing countries.

We must not allow these events to set us back in our fulfilment of the pledges given one year ago by our heads of State and Government in their Millennium Declaration — such as the promise to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day; to ensure universal primary education for girls and boys alike; to halt and begin reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS; and to preserve the planet for future generations by adopting a new ethic of conservation and stewardship.

Those tasks remain as urgent as they ever were — if anything, more so; and this Organization's work to advance them — which is described in detail in the report that is before the Assembly — remains as important as ever.

These longer-term issues of development can and must be addressed during this session of the Assembly. Our understandable preoccupation with the fight against terrorism must not lead us to neglect them.

The social and economic evils in our world are all too real, as is the need to make globalization work for all the peoples of the world by embedding a new global economy in values of solidarity, social justice, and human rights.

But these things cannot be achieved by violence. On the contrary, the hope of relieving world poverty will only diminish if the world is polarized into mutually hostile camps of rich and poor, or North and South.

The only route that offers any hope of a better future for all humanity is that of cooperation and partnership, in which all social forces — States, the private sector, institutions of learning and research, and civil society in all its forms — unite their efforts in pursuit of specific, attainable goals.

At the centre of all these partnerships must stand this Organization — which, one year ago, heads of State and Government undertook to strengthen and make more effective, because they considered it

> "the indispensable common house of the entire human family." *(A/RES/55/2, para. 32)*

The United Nations must listen to all these different partners. It must guide them. It must urge them on. The United Nations must provide a framework of shared values and understanding, within which their free and voluntary efforts can interact and reinforce each other, instead of getting in each other's way.

And — to quote the Millennium Declaration once more — it is through the United Nations that the peoples of the world must seek to realize their

> "universal aspirations for peace, cooperation and development". *(ibid.)*

That is the path traced for us by our heads of State and Government one year ago. Let us not be shaken, even by the unspeakable horror that we witnessed 13 days ago, in our determination to proceed along it.

Let us reject the path of violence, which is the product of nihilism and despair. Let us prove by our actions that there is no need to despair; that the political and economic problems of our time can be solved peacefully; and that no human life should be sacrificed, because every human being has cause to hope.

That, I believe, is the true business of the Assembly and the true mission of this Organization.

Mr. Ivanov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This session of the General Assembly has begun its work under tragic circumstances. The entire civilized world shares the grief of the American people. We also mourn all of those who have fallen victim to terrorists in different parts of the globe. In today's interdependent and globalized world, the pain of bereavement is common to us all, regardless of where a terrorist act may have occurred.

The recent tragedy makes it dramatically clear that the sweeping changes that globalization has brought about in all areas of modern life entail both positive and negative consequences for all of humankind.

On the one hand, the threat of global nuclear confrontation has become a thing of the past. Advances in science and technology and the rapid expansion of world trade and economic relations are providing the necessary conditions for the sustainable development of all humankind. On the other hand, the benefits of globalization have turned out to be simply inaccessible to most States, and the gap between the most developed and the least developed countries continues to widen rapidly. Finally, the world is confronting new threats and challenges, such as aggressive separatism, organized crime, illegal drug trafficking, in addition to international terrorism.

Given these circumstances, the international community is facing the tremendous task of responding adequately and, most importantly, collectively to the challenges of our time. There is an urgent need to develop a joint action strategy that could make use of globalization for a just and fair resolution of the key problems that mankind is facing and for the strengthening of universal security. In this context, we subscribe to the idea, articulated in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, that it is necessary to strengthen and enhance the role of the United Nations as an indispensable instrument for maintaining international peace and security and for mobilizing the people of the world against new, unprecedented threats. With its firm commitment precisely to this approach in shaping a new world order, the Russian Federation advocates the adoption of collective measures that would make globalization processes manageable and therefore secure. Each State should see for itself that the results of globalization can indeed contribute to its prosperity and well-being.

An efficient mechanism for globalization management should be comprehensive and should cover all areas, from the political and military to the humanitarian. The Russian Federation is open to the closest cooperation with other States with a view to attaining this objective, which is of primary importance for the future of humankind.

In fighting new dangers, of which international terrorism is no doubt the greatest, the main objective is to set up a global system to counteract new threats and challenges. Such a system should integrate relevant multilateral interaction mechanisms, including early warning and the prevention of emerging threats, as well as a resolute and adequate response to any of their manifestations, within the framework of international

law and under the coordinating leadership of the United Nations.

As far as the political sphere is concerned, as the Secretary-General has just noted correctly, we have in mind the comprehensive implementation of the decisions of the Millennium Summit and Assembly, made here a year ago, primarily those concerning the establishment of a just and violence-free democratic world order serving the interests and aspirations of all States and peoples. This can only be achieved if all countries are equal before world law based on the United Nations Charter and other fundamental principles and rules of international law, and hold them sacred.

The strengthening, and not the erosion, of international law and order should prevail in the era of globalization. Just as a democratically viable State can be built only on a solid legislative foundation, more robust international legal norms are required for a new world order to take shape.

Developing a kind of international law that is sensitive to the changing world calls for joint coordinated efforts, while any unilateral actions in a world where destinies of countries, peoples and individuals are becoming increasingly intertwined will only erode the rule of law, thus compromising the international community's capacity to efficiently address emerging and ever more dangerous challenges.

A State's prestige among nations should be measured not by its military or economic might but, rather, by its ability to responsibly fulfil its international obligations.

In the military sphere, the priority task is to strengthen strategic stability as the critical component of international security. We understand the Secretary-General's concern, expressed in his report, over the continuing growth of global military expenditures and the low level of international cooperation on disarmament.

Fully aware of its role in ensuring international security, the Russian Federation has put forward a detailed, realistic programme to enhance strategic stability and expedite the disarmament process. The president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has called upon the five nuclear Powers and permanent members of the Security Council to initiate a process of consultation on nuclear disarmament and strategic stability.

We reaffirm our proposal to the United States on a coordinated reduction of strategic offensive weapons to 1,500 nuclear warheads for each party by 2008, possibly followed by a further reduction. It should be recalled that in 1990, at the end of the cold war, the aggregate strategic nuclear arsenals of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States alone amounted to 20,834 warheads. This initiative, if implemented, would both help consolidate global stability and significantly boost joint efforts to build a new strategic relationship between Russia and the United States. It would also be an unprecedented breakthrough in nuclear disarmament and a strong incentive to enhance the regimes of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to make the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty universal.

Preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space forms an important part of the set of measures designed to ensure strategic stability. It is our common duty to coming generations to keep outer space peaceful through joint efforts. Russia invites the world community to start working out a comprehensive agreement on the non-deployment of weapons in outer space and on the non-use or threat of force against space objects. The first practical step to this end could be a moratorium on deploying weapons in outer space, pending a relevant international agreement.

In addition to the traditional disarmament agenda, the era of globalization brings new challenges to international security, thus raising the number of States involved in disarmament. This includes the non-proliferation of missile technologies, the elimination of chemical weapons, the non-development of bacteriological weapons, and blocking the channels of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In a word, there is a great accumulation of disarmament-related issues that call for thorough and comprehensive discussion. To that end, a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament seems to be the most appropriate forum, and the Russian Federation actively supports the idea of convening it.

In peace-making special attention should be given to the introduction of a culture of conflict-prevention into international practice. The Russian Federation supports the main ideas of the Secretary-General's

special report on that matter. There is no time to lose. With acute crises in various parts of the globe posing a real threat to international security, rapid and concerted action is called for. In that respect, events in the Middle East and the Balkans are of particular alarm.

When seeking to resolve crisis situations we cannot remain oblivious to their underlying causes. As a rule — especially where the African continent is concerned — crises have their origins in social and economic problems. The specific features of regional crises noted by the Secretary-General — such as their expanding sources of funding and the availability of a tremendous choice of weapons — are in tune with the initiative put forward by President Vladimir Putin in addressing the need to cut off external sources of support for conflicts.

Globalization has greatly broadened the horizons of international cooperation in the economic sphere by providing unparalleled opportunities for the movement of goods, capital and services. Sophisticated industries have emerged in various parts of the world. However, has that benefited everyone? Have famine and illiteracy been eradicated from the world? Definitely not. Rich States have become richer by reaping the fruits of globalization, while poor States have found themselves even poorer. If the current trend persists and wealth continues to grow on only one side, the other side will see an inevitable rise in social tension and political extremism. The only way to prevent that is to enhance the social component of globalization and to put an end to discrimination in international economic relations.

The formation of a global information space epitomizes the world integration process. We can now follow live coverage of world events as they unfold. However, the information space has become a popular target for various extremist forces. The threat of cyber-terrorism is growing. Censorship has been replaced by a no less dangerous evil, that of information wars capable of causing instability. That has jeopardized freedom of speech and the right of citizens to truthful information. Concrete steps are therefore required to strengthen international information security. With the direct participation of Russia, this issue has already been the subject of detailed discussions in the United Nations.

Environmental problems are today as relevant to human survival as military ones. Our future depends on the state of the environment. Its preservation is therefore our common challenge and great responsibility. Russia reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol.

On the whole, climate-related issues require a comprehensive approach. Taking this into account, Russia has proposed to convene in 2003 a world conference on climate change that would bring together Governments, business and academic communities, as well as civil society.

Globalization has greatly expanded opportunities in the humanitarian field. The very concept of human rights has ceased to be an exclusively internal affair of States and has acquired universal scope. The Secretary-General notes that

> "Today, universal ideas — the sovereignty of the people, accountability of leaders, individual rights, and the rule of law — are spreading around the world. Yet there is no guarantee that these values will not be reversed, and that some nations will not once again succumb to tyranny and oppression." (A/56/1, para.5)

Like other States, Russia strongly condemns flagrant violations of human rights in any part of the world. At the same time, we are firmly convinced that the international community should respond to humanitarian crises solely on the basis of a solid grounding in law and legitimacy based on the Charter of the United Nations.

Unbiased analysis convinces us that globalization must be manageable. There is therefore a need for a unified centre that could coordinate national, regional and international efforts in that area. The role of such a centre belongs rightfully to the United Nations. The universal nature of the world Organization, its wealth of experience in multilateral cooperation, its considerable resources and organizing capacities make it possible for it to fulfil the most complicated tasks with regard to making globalization serve all members of the international community. In fulfilling its functions, the United Nations must adequately respond to the challenges of the times, constantly strengthen its operational potential and enhance the effectiveness of its actions. This is precisely what we see as the purpose of the United Nations reform process.

Globalization shrinks space and time, making the world an ever smaller place. Today, we all have an

immense responsibility to succeeding generations. We must strengthen the positive trends of globalization and only use them in a way that would benefit the entire human race. We are convinced that, by jointly achieving that goal, we will be able to build a truly safe, stable and prosperous world in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Hume (United States of America): I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report. He has underscored the importance of the United Nations agenda and the work that the United Nations is committed to; and that the entire membership has a new and overarching challenge after 11 September.

My delegation would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all who have expressed condolences and pledged support in the wake of the terrible events of 11 September. Americans also realize that people from dozens of other countries lost their lives in those attacks. This tragedy is truly global in scope, and so must be the response. The people of the United States also stand with those of you who are grieving for your own. We offer our deepest sympathies to you and to your people.

A week from today, in this Hall, the membership will discuss measures to eliminate international terrorism. We look forward to that discussion, which we hope will help promote unity of purpose and strong steps the United Nations can take to combat terror. The United Nations must play an international role in marshalling the international community's efforts to defeat this scourge. Those efforts will also require absolute clarity that the international community condemns and rejects any effort to offer false justification for the attack, or to protect those who committed it.

This is a crucial moment for the United Nations. It has a chance to live up to the ideals on which it was founded. The United States pledges its support to the United Nations. We are eager to work with other Member States to improve the Organization and to support the work of the Secretary-General. His report shows that the United Nations agenda remains broad and we will continue to work on this agenda even as we focus immediately on the overarching challenge of international terrorism.

The effort to reform the United Nations has made progress in recent years. This progress must continue. One specific action the United Nations can take immediately – and is, in fact, overdue to take – is to put sunset provisions in place. Sunset provisions would ensure that United Nations programme activities do not go on and on unless their relevance and effectiveness are regularly affirmed. This reform measure is covered by the Secretary-General's report and it has been on the table since 1997. The United States looks forward to more productive work with the United Nations membership and on many other reform matters during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Great challenges lie ahead for this Organization. The United States believes that it is in the vital interests of the world community to enhance the relevance of the United Nations and the United States vows to work with all Members to achieve that end.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Our consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization falls this year on the very date on which the general debate had been scheduled to begin. The rooms and hallways of our Organization, which are usually bustling with life and activity at this time of year, bear witness through their emptiness and silence of the helplessness of an Organization surprised, like the rest of the world, by the brutal eruption of terrorism in the very city where it is headquartered. The United Nations, however, shall — indeed, must — find the responses and means to confront this new peril of modern times and to defeat it.

The events in New York and Washington, D.C., two weeks ago were of such gravity and monstrousness that the United Nations, which is and must remain the framework for all global action against any global threat, has no choice, if it is to remain credible and respected and to perform useful work, but to act and act quickly by creating a joint, coordinated and effective strategy to eliminate this phenomenon, which threatens all humanity, with no distinction of race, culture or religion, and the very foundations of our civilization.

If we can speedily conclude, possibly in the coming weeks, the draft global convention on terrorism, consideration of which began last year, and if we can update and re-energize the existing anti-terrorist legal arsenal, we will send a strong signal of the United Nations resolve to contain this phenomenon.

I now wish to thank the Secretary-General for his excellent presentation of his report here and for his

words of hope and determination therein. I also wish him every success, which he deserves as he enters his second five-year mandate at the head of the Secretariat of our Organization.

As to his report, I should like to comment on the manner in which it was prepared and to make a few suggestions, if I may, on how to improve its presentation before I address four other points of particular interest to me.

At the outset, I feel it necessary to note that, given that this is a major report on the work of the Organization from the highest official of the Secretariat, it is essential, especially in these very special circumstances at the threshold of a new mandate, that it enshrine a mission, be focused on an approach and provide new points of view. Furthermore, even if he is simply the faithful executor of the will of the Member States — which alone prepare, formulate and decide the general policy of the Organization — I believe that, in view of his unique position, of the distance he enjoys from the Member States and of his overall perspective, the Secretary-General, while perhaps not showing us the way, can and must identify any weaknesses or omissions in our work, acknowledge the shortcomings of his administration and suggest new avenues to explore.

Aware of the extreme sensitivity of Member States to anyone's venturing into what they consider to be their exclusive preserve, it goes without saying that any incursion of the Secretary-General in that domain will have to be carried out with tact and prudence — qualities with which we know him to be generously endowed. The Secretary-General's bold report on the millennium was, from that standpoint, appreciated by all and served as a framework for the Declaration adopted at the Summit.

Finally, it seems to me appropriate that, especially at the end of his first five years, the Secretary-General should take stock — and it is not too late for him to do so — of what has been accomplished in the past few years and set out the general principles of what he would like to undertake in the next five if the Member States give him the mandate for it.

The first point I wish to address at some length is the emerging role of civil society in our Organization. From the outset, I would note that civil society has progressively imposed itself in recent years as an influential actor on the international scene, daily gaining new ground for action and expression where States and intergovernmental organizations have withdrawn and resolutely weighing in on the decision-making process at the national, regional and international levels.

In the face of this irreversible reality, it is important — unless we wish to see a recurrence of the unfortunate incidents at Seattle, Prague, Göteborg and Naples — to reflect together on ways and means of allowing civil society, not of course to participate in the decision-making that is the exclusive prerogative of the political sphere, particularly in this Organization, which is first and foremost, we must recall, an inter-State Organization, but to make a contribution to the general thinking; in other words, to make its voice heard in an atmosphere of order and serenity.

We must therefore agree on a series of rules and standard guidelines to regulate in a transparent, fair and rigorous manner the participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations activities in order to enable them, in their respective areas of competence, to enrich our debate in a serious and responsible manner and to bring their special knowledge and experience to the consideration of the great issues before our Organization. To that end, I feel it essential first and foremost that all non-governmental organizations that wish to be heard at the United Nations apply for proper accreditation through the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations. That Committee's mandate will have to be enhanced and its support structures strengthened in order to allow it to handle requests for accreditation as speedily as possible.

The members of the Committee should obviously give particular attention to the agenda and programme of the candidate NGOs, to their sources of financing — in order to determine their degree of transparency and independence with respect to States and interest groups — to their past and present activities and to the extent to which these activities are in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

In addition, it seems important to me to see to it that there is a balance between the NGOs from the North and those from the South, whose concerns and capacities are not always the same, and to reflect on the possibility of providing financial assistance for NGOs from the South to enable them to participate in the various forums where they could make a useful contribution.

Once an NGO enjoys consultative status with the United Nations, it will no longer be necessary for it to request permission to participate in a meeting, which will spare Member States the useless discussions on the participation of non-governmental organizations in each special session. It will also spare them from having to define, case by case, the forms and conditions for NGO participation.

My second point concerns the question of Western Sahara, which, to say the least, is treated with reproachable lightness in the Secretary-General's report.

Judging from the text of the relevant paragraph, the activities of the United Nations during the past year were confined to inviting the parties to discuss a stillborn plan for autonomy. This hardly does justice to the efforts of the United Nations and of the Secretary-General himself to implement the United Nations settlement plan that was accepted by the parties, which enjoys the support of the international community as a whole; nor does it do justice to the proposals presented by the Frente POLISARIO to resolve the problems encountered by the plan. The corrigendum that has been issued goes some way towards remedying this situation, but it is important to recall that the Secretary-General receives his mandate not only from the Security Council but also from the General Assembly, to which he is responsible and to which he must regularly report.

Our Organization — and this is my third point — undoubtedly plays an indispensable role in the coordination and provision of humanitarian emergency assistance to the neediest persons in the world, who are growing in number this year as a result both of persisting conflicts and of the countless natural catastrophes that have afflicted different parts of the planet. Our Organization must support the capacities of the countries concerned.

To carry out this noble mission, the various actors of the United Nations — headed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs — have received clear and precise mandates to coordinate and supply humanitarian assistance, which must, it should be recalled, respond to the universal principles of humaneness, neutrality and impartiality, and be in line with the guiding principles annexed to General Assembly resolution 46/182, to which we reaffirm out resolute attachment.

This being the case, it is regrettable to note that instead of the universally enshrined term "humanitarian assistance", we increasingly come across the term "humanitarian intervention". This term is used even though we all know that this controversial concept raises a number of political and legal questions and infringes upon the above-mentioned principles, as well as those of national sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the Charter. This drift in the language used cannot be accepted, particularly when this terminology is used with reference to internally displaced persons (IDPs).

In this context, it seems to us important that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee be far more transparent and not act beyond the limits of the mandate that it has been given. It should also be said that the question of the inter-agency high-level network to study IDP issues has not yet been clarified. Moreover, we also feel that the recommendations to be formulated should first be examined by Member States so that they will not have to suffer the fate of the guiding principles of the Special Representative for internally displaced persons, who had not thought it necessary to consult Member States. It is our conviction that consultation and dialogue cannot but strengthen the action of the United Nations in the interest of all, and in particular of victims.

My last point is that we have all noted that the United Nations resorts increasingly to groups of eminent experts and study groups, which must obviously be paid. It seems to me that within the Organization we have people of confirmed competence on whom we are not sufficiently relying, and that these people have the advantage of being very familiar with the Organization and its strengths and weaknesses. There are also bodies such as the Joint Inspection Unit that could perform quite competently certain tasks that the Secretariat has entrusted to expensive study groups.

It goes without saying that for certain questions that require specific expertise not available in the Organization and its bodies, we must have recourse to external consultants. But this has to be done transparently, and whenever a group of experts is to be set up, Member States must be consulted in advance on its purpose and its composition.

These are the comments that I wished to share with the Assembly and that will, I hope, help the Secretary-General accomplish the difficult mission

with which he has been entrusted by the Member States.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to reiterate from this podium its absolute condemnation, which the Government and the people of Kuwait have announced, of the terrorist attack on the United States and its friendly people on 11 September. My delegation would like to extend its condolences to the families of the victims, and we pray that those injured will recover quickly. Such an act is rejected by all religions and all norms and customs. The Islamic religion, in particular, considers that when one kills a person without just cause, thus corrupting the Earth, it is as if one had killed all the people of the world. He who gives life gives life to all people of the world.

Despite the fact that this meeting is devoted to the discussion of agenda item 10, on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, we expect that the issue of terrorism and its adverse impact, as a result of what we have seen recently, will be the main issue in this discussion. My delegation will make its views concerning this issue well known in detail next week, when the General Assembly deliberates on this issue.

What we would like to deal with today is the optimism contained in the report of the Secretary-General and the optimism of the Member States concerning the possibility of bringing into effect the concept of a culture of prevention in order to safeguard the maintenance of international peace and security. But the recent terrible, loathsome terrorist acts against the United States — of which we in Kuwait have a tangible understanding, because for long years we have been suffering as a result of such acts — lead us, regrettably, to the belief that a culture of prevention must be applied in a relative manner, owing to the dominance and prevalence of evil elements. Nevertheless, Kuwait urges united, sustained and clear-sighted progress in confronting and preventing such loathsome acts, with a view to safeguarding international stability.

My delegation stresses that terrorism must not be linked to any particular nationality, region, religion or ethnic group. It is linked to evil movements whose objective is to threaten human life.

I turn now to the substance of the main issue before us today. I convey our sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his re-election to a second term. We are utterly certain that he is fully deserving of the confidence of the entire international community, which he earned very early in his tenure. We in Kuwait are in full agreement with what the Secretary-General says in paragraph 1 of his report, which reflects his sense of responsibility, frankness and transparency, and that of Member States, in describing the concerns and challenges facing the United Nations. The Secretary-General says that his report is

> "a sober recognition of the complexities of the tasks facing the Organization. At the same time, it underlines the enduring significance of the United Nations as an instrument of global cooperation for the common good". (*A/56/1, para. 1*)

Despite the challenges before us, the United Nations remains the principal tool for realizing our hopes for global cooperation in all areas. My delegation has taken careful note of the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, and I should like to focus on a few of the important issues that the Secretary-General has included in his report.

First of all, the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Declaration set out a plan of action for the United Nations in the new century to confront the challenges we face. We encourage follow-up of what was agreed upon by our leaders, and urge that we all work throughout the session to launch a new rational, international debate on this issue focusing on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326). My delegation stresses the importance of avoiding a general discussion that would result in the establishment of committees and working groups; that would plunge us into a cycle of reports, proposals and recommendations, without bringing about the actual implementation of things on which we have already agreed.

Second, the Secretary-General paints a tragic picture of the escalation of violence between the struggling Palestinian people and the Israeli occupation forces. But we want to emphasize that the escalation should be blamed on the irrational policies followed by the Israeli Government, which bears responsibility for the eruption of the situation there — especially

following Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the holy mosque in Jerusalem.

Third, Kuwait wants to draw attention to paragraph 31, in which the Secretary-General reports on Iraq's continuing non-compliance with Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 1284 (1999). We entirely share the Secretary-General's regret at the continuing suffering of the Iraqi people, and with the assignment of responsibility to the Iraqi Government for its refusal to meet the demands set out in the relevant Security Council resolutions and for its refusal to cooperate with the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, with Ambassador Vorontsov or with the tripartite committee on resolving the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and third-country nationals, as has been mentioned in relevant Security Council resolutions.

Kuwait calls on the Iraqi Government to listen to reason and to fulfil its commitments as soon as possible, especially in the light of the seven press statements recently issued by the Security Council calling on the Iraqi Government to cooperate in resolving the problem of Kuwaiti prisoners of war and the return of Kuwaiti property.

Fourth, my delegation has studied the Secretary-General's comments on United Nations peacekeeping operations in various parts of the world. My delegation was interested to note the report's failure to mention the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) in the demilitarized area between Iraq and Kuwait. The Mission is performing its functions in line with the mandate entrusted to it in Security Council resolutions. My delegation pays tribute to the members of the force for the role they are playing in protecting the safety of the Kuwait-Iraq border.

Fifth, Kuwait expresses its satisfaction at the work of the Security Council to ease any adverse impact that could result from the sanctions regime put in place by the Council. My delegation fully agrees with the view of the Secretary-General on this issue, something of which he had earlier written in his millennium report (A/54/2000), that sanctions should be focused on targeted leaders to make them comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and to alter their political behaviour, and that negative effects of sanctions regimes on the targeted people should be avoided.

Sixth, my delegation urges the United Nations, and the General Assembly in particular, to continue to focus on issues related to Africa, the most important of which is assistance to African countries in addressing the spread of HIV/AIDS, and in solving all the political issues that have for so long bedevilled the peoples of that continent. We have full confidence in the Secretary-General's opinion concerning the issues faced by the African continent, mentioned in paragraph 189 of his report, in which he noted the determination and will of the Africans to confront the challenges facing their continent.

Despite the fact that the Secretary-General dealt with environmental issues in his report, my delegation anticipated greater interest in what the Millennium Summit pointed out regarding the importance of safeguarding our environment from destruction resulting from human use, especially during conflicts, a matter that motivated us in Kuwait to propose the inclusion of agenda item 183 of the draft agenda, entitled "Observance of the International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflicts". We thankfully call for the continuation of the assistance provided to us by States to achieve this noble objective by dealing with it at this session.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to sincerely congratulate and thank the Secretary-General for all his efforts and those of all the United Nations bodies working in coordination with Member States to safeguard the work of this Organization within the framework of the principles and purposes in the Charter, the most important being the maintenance of international peace and security and the provision of a better life of dignity for the peoples of the world.

Mr. Niehaus (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to reiterate the most heartfelt condolences of the people and Government of Costa Rica to the people and Government of the United States with regard to the criminal and despicable terrorist attacks to which it fell victim on 11 September 2001. Costa Rica condemns vehemently and categorically these barbaric and criminal acts, which are contrary to all basic human values, while extending its brotherly hand to the American people. These sad events have changed the international context irreversibly, and they force us to redefine the priorities of this Organization.

At this time, humanity lives under the shadow of war, destruction, terror and death. Hate and violence rule the hearts of men. Nations rise up in arms against each other and the peoples drown in rivers of blood. Notwithstanding this Organization's many efforts, the past year has witnessed countless conflicts, killings and offences against human dignity. How many lives have been lost? How many dreams, hopes and aspirations have been torn apart? How much despair has been born?

Humanity must take the reins of its destiny and head, with firm hands, towards a better future. Today we must reject, once and for, all war, hate and fear, and we must embrace peace. In facing terror and hate, we must raise the flag of civilization, tolerance and brotherhood. Confronted with irrational violence, we must take up the arms of reason, law and order.

In this context, the United Nations could and should play a central role in building a future of peace and freedom. This Organization must be a fortress against war, hate and poverty. It should be a beacon that lights the way and points towards the goal.

In the light of the recent events, it is appropriate to ask what should be the basis of this Organization's action. What principles should we follow to build a better future?

For Costa Rica, the answer is clear. The promotion of human rights and respect for human dignity in all spheres must be the main guidelines for the activities of the United Nations and each of our nations. The protection of human beings is the only justification for peacekeeping activities. The promotion of human dignity is the only source of legitimization for pursuing sustainable development. The protection of human life is the only justification for the protection of the environment or the search for economic development. The philosophy of this Organization must therefore be deeply anthropocentric.

The work of this Organization in the area of human rights is noteworthy. Codification efforts and the periodic thematic conferences have produced a substantial body of norms and principles that give the international community clear guidelines for its conduct. At this time, we should concentrate our efforts on the implementation of those norms. It is necessary to rationalize and coordinate the work of the monitoring organs with a view to making them more effective. It is necessary to reinforce the work of promotion in order to expand respect for fundamental rights to all levels of society. It is vital to emphasize the implementation and achievement of economic and social rights.

At the same time, the United Nations must remain vigilant in the face of new challenges that threaten the enjoyment of fundamental rights. We note with concern recent developments in the area of cloning and biotechnology, some of which run counter to life and human dignity.

We believe that the role of the family, as the basic unit of society, must be strengthened. The family is the irreplaceable seed bed where basic values of cohabitation and respect for the dignity of others are sown. It is therefore vital for raising healthy, productive and responsible citizens. We must also make additional efforts to support parents in raising their children and thus in the creation of a stable and productive society. In this context, my country recently passed an outstanding law on responsible paternity, which guarantees through unprecedented strong judicial instruments that biological parents take responsibility for the education and maintenance of their children born out of wedlock.

The work of maintaining international peace and security must be conceptualized from the point of view of human rights. Armed conflicts generate ongoing humanitarian crises and atrocities. We should acknowledge that the real victims of war are not the dead soldiers, but the displaced or refugee children and elderly, the raped women, the murdered youths, the mothers who lose their means of support and the innocent workers whose workplaces are destroyed. As long as war exists, it will be impossible to respect human rights.

So far, unfortunately, the United Nations has not always been able to confront the scourge of war properly. Frequently, the Security Council merely responds to acute political and military crises with weak declarations. Often its action has been precluded by the irresponsible use of the veto or by the imposition of petty national interests. How many peacekeeping operations have failed due to the lack of essential resources or because their mandates were ill-conceived?

It is imperative to reinforce this Organization's peacekeeping activities. We must revitalize the Security Council in order to increase its legitimacy and

capacity for action. We must furnish it with the resources and political support necessary for it to perform its duties effectively. We cannot agree with the imposition of sanctions regimes that harm innocent populations.

We cannot consent to the imposition of sanctions regimes that harm innocent civilian populations. Reform of the Security Council is thus crucial for the future of the United Nations. Whether humankind has an effective, democratic, impartial and just mechanism for the maintenance of international peace and security depends on the success of that reform effort.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General that the early prevention of armed conflict requires us to face up to the structural causes of any such crisis. We therefore acknowledge that it is necessary to adopt preventive measures to meet the many needs in the areas of food, health, housing, drinking water, education, work training, labour, fair wages, productivity, competitiveness and access to opportunity, as well as to establish and strengthen democracy, good governance and respect for human rights. The United Nations can and must play a key role in all these areas.

We are aware, however, that neither poverty nor underdevelopment, ethnic differences, health problems, gender distinctions or lack of educational opportunity can produce armed conflict in and of themselves. These structural factors are able to generate armed conflict only if political leaders are willing to call to violence groups that have some sort of social grievance or claim. It is the political leaders, therefore, who have a particular responsibility for the prevention of conflict.

Weapons serve as a catalyst to armed conflict. Their proliferation fuels the fire of violence, worsens conflict and hatred, exacerbates crime and terrorism and fosters political and social instability. Military arsenals prolong conflict and hinder peace processes. Armies are insatiable in their consumption of meagre national resources, while our peoples suffer under the most wretched conditions of poverty.

In order to achieve international peace and security, we must specifically forbid the transfer of weapons to all rebel, extremist and terrorist groups. Similarly, the transfer of weapons should be prohibited to Governments that commit massive or systematic violations of human rights, do not respect democratic principles or have not ratified the principal instruments of international humanitarian law. We believe that it is vital to regulate the possession of light weapons by civilians.

Furthermore, the promotion of peace and the prevention of conflict require a continuous and sustained effort to build an environment of mutual support in which violence is rejected. True and sustainable peace can be achieved only when social and political differences are resolved through democratic means: dialogue and negotiation.

Costa Rica firmly supports the peaceful settlement of disputes. My country condemns any unilateral or disproportionate use of force or countermeasures, while embracing the principles and mechanisms embodied in international law. In this regard, we note that the resolution of controversies by judicial means has an essential role to play in the promotion of peaceful relations between nations, and we welcome the valuable contribution of the International Court of Justice to global stability.

Furthermore, it is indispensable to strengthen this Organization's efforts against terrorism. The fight against terrorism requires courage — the courage to overcome fear and hatred and to avoid getting caught up in a cycle of violence — as well as the intelligence to choose the best instrument against the criminals. We must avoid the danger of acting in such a way that terrorists are turned into martyrs, and intolerance and hatred are fuelled. In facing the scourge of terrorism we must resort to the rule of law, justice and due process.

My delegation views with concern the growing inequality with regard to the vulnerability of certain States. Those with fragile economies and those whose people have fewer resources at their disposal for prevention and reconstruction suffer more acutely from the effects of natural disasters. The lack of financial resources imposes a harsh limit on the capacity of the poorest nations to prevent humanitarian emergencies. For this reason, we advocate enhanced international cooperation and greater assistance to developing nations so as to enable them to design and implement programmes to reduce their vulnerability.

We believe that the promotion of sustainable development must become an essential goal of this Organization, independent of the objective of preventing armed conflicts. The United Nations should

promote not only peace but social justice, democracy and development.

We must invest intensively and systematically in our human resources, devoting as many resources as we can to education and health. Only an educated population can live in freedom; only a healthy population can work for development; only a cultured population can integrate itself into the globalized contemporary world. Similarly, it is necessary to guarantee the sustainable use and management of natural resources. The preservation of the environment is a profoundly humanistic activity. Adequate living conditions are not possible — now or in the future — if the environment is not healthy.

During the past 10 years we have witnessed an unprecedented revolution in the areas of telecommunications and information management. This revolution has provided developing countries with new opportunities for growth while enabling us to compete in the global market place and increase our production. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, we must use the new technologies in accordance with the highest technical standards available, seeking to democratize access to the new knowledge and promote the development of human capital.

The provision of humanitarian assistance is, perhaps, the most important and fruitful activity of the United Nations. When United Nations bodies provide food for refugees or distribute drinking water to the victims of drought, or when the Organization's personnel teach displaced children how to read, help in the reconstruction effort after a flood or provide shelter to those who fall prey to the harshness of the elements, the Organization has a direct, positive and cross-cutting impact on the life of other human beings. Humanitarian assistance justifies the existence of this Organization and ennobles it.

We are starting out in the twenty-first century in the hope of overcoming the worse afflictions suffered by most of the peoples of the developing nations: extreme poverty, illiteracy, armed conflict and violations of their fundamental rights. Only a few days ago, however, we witnessed bloody and atrocious acts of international terrorism that shocked the conscience of the whole of humanity. Under these difficult circumstances, the world is looking to the United Nations for leadership. The people are calling for firm and resolute action by the international community. All humankind calls upon us to fulfil the lofty objectives that we embraced when we founded this Organization. We must respond swiftly.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I join previous speakers in expressing my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of our Organization. I also congratulate him on his recent re-election to his post and to wish him every success.

The tragic events of 11 September not only seriously affected the work of our Organization, and the General Assembly in particular, but shocked the conscience of humanity and left a deep scar on the lives of millions of people. The brutality and scale of those acts have profoundly changed our perception of the global challenges and how to deal with them.

I should like to take this opportunity to express from this lofty rostrum our deepest condolences to the people and to the Government of the United States and to convey our sympathy to all those who suffered in the attacks.

We strongly believe that it is only through the concerted efforts of the international community as a whole that we can effectively withstand this challenge. I want to stress in particular that the role of this Organization will become even more crucial in setting up a new framework for international cooperation in this field. The United Nations has done a great deal by establishing the legal foundations of such cooperation. What we really need, in our view, is the establishment of a proper institutional framework to complement and coordinate the individual efforts of Member States in combating international terrorism, and to ensure that the legal instruments we have elaborated so far are implemented in the most effective manner. Such an institution, in our view, should contribute to the prevention and suppression of acts of international terrorism, and ensure and promote the broadest possible mutual assistance between all Member States. We hope that the General Assembly will carefully consider this idea.

During the Millennium Summit, the heads of State and Government adopted the Millennium Declaration, whereby they pledged to uphold and promote the principles and goals laid down when this Organization was founded. We welcome the issuance by the Secretary-General of the "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration". We are confident that this document will

assist in combining our efforts to meet these lofty commitments, and we look forward to its consideration by the General Assembly.

Last year the Organization carried out a thorough analysis of its practices and policies in a number of important areas, including, among others, peacekeeping, conflict prevention and the issue of sanctions. We welcome this trend, in particular as it concerns the work of the Security Council.

Ukraine has steadfastly advocated the need to strengthen the peacekeeping and conflict-prevention dimensions of United Nations activities, and we are particularly satisfied with the remarkable progress made by the Organization in these areas over the past year. We welcome the ongoing reform process, boosted by the Secretary-General's two reports of October 2000 and June 2001 on the implementation of the Brahimi Panel's recommendations. We underline the need for the speedy implementation of the measures proposed by the Secretary-General.

I cannot overlook another important dimension of peacekeeping reform, namely the efforts aimed at developing a more effective relationship between the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat. A significant step forward was taken with the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1327 (2000) and 1353 (2001), which introduced a number of new and important measures to improve the quality and effectiveness of consultation mechanisms.

The issuance of the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict was one of the most remarkable events of the past year. We note with satisfaction that Ukraine's views regarding the need for the United Nations to adopt a comprehensive strategy for the use of conflict-prevention tools are largely reflected in the report, and we look forward to its thorough consideration by the current session of the General Assembly.

We share the positive assessment made by the Secretary-General in his report of the continued work in the Security Council on the concept of sanctions. We also welcome the increased recourse by the Council to targeted and time-limited measures under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter, in order to minimize the risk of sanctions adversely affecting innocent populations and third States.

Sanctions, however, will and must remain a necessary and important policy instrument in the hands of the Security Council. It is therefore of utmost importance that the Council apply a clear and coherent methodology for the imposition, application and lifting of measures under Chapter VII. In this connection, I wish to welcome the work done by the Security Council working group on general issues on sanctions. We hope that the present discussion will give a strong impetus and contribute to the adoption of the report in the near future.

I wish to express Ukraine's strong belief that there is a need to strengthen the potential of the United Nations in the field of sanctions monitoring, in particular through the establishment, within the United Nations, of an office to carry out this important work.

The issues of nuclear non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament remain among the imperative priorities for humankind and a crucial element of the United Nations strategy for peace and security in the twenty-first century.

While great challenges are still ahead of us, we are particularly pleased with the substantive progress made in the area of combating the trafficking in, and proliferation of, illicit small arms and light weapons. The recent United Nations Conference on this question became a unique opportunity for the international community to carry out a comprehensive analysis of this multifaceted problem and to develop a strategy for coordinating collective efforts in this field. Ukraine welcomes the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference, which reflects realistic approaches and will facilitate further efforts towards an eventual solution to the problem.

We would also like to commend highly the adoption of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It is our deep conviction that the United Nations should continue playing a leading role in combating illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, as well as in restraining proliferation of these weapons.

Ukraine commends the work of the Organization in the field of cooperation for development. Preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development and for the World Summit

on Sustainable Development, both to be held next year, are among the most important elements of this work. We believe that these upcoming forums will become key landmarks for the identification of a sustainable development vision for the twenty-first century and will help attract investments in the process of development for the benefit of all countries, including the economies in transition.

Ukraine also attaches great significance to the Organization's efforts to fight HIV/AIDS and commends the results achieved in this area, particularly the important outcome of the twenty-sixth special session of the Assembly and, specifically, the Secretary-General's initiative to establish a global AIDS and health fund to assist countries affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS and to combat this epidemic.

We highly appreciate the efforts undertaken by the Organization to assist national Governments in coping with natural disasters and other emergencies, as is reflected in the Secretary-General's report.

We fully agree with the words of the Secretary-General:

> "In an increasingly globalized world, none of the critical issues we are dealing with can be resolved within a solely national framework. All of them require cooperation, partnership and burden-sharing among Governments, the United Nations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society." (*A/56/1(SUPP), para.11*)

These words are fully applicable to the Chernobyl problem. We are grateful to all those who have continued to render their most valuable support to the people of Ukraine in coping with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. We hope that future reports on the work of the Organization will cover United Nations efforts aimed at mitigating its consequences.

Time has proven that the prospects for a safe future for humankind depends on the readiness and ability of the international community to make long-term investments in the development of democracy and in the protection of human rights. The concepts of human rights, as well as international treaties adopted in this field, are the most valuable heritage of humankind in the twenty-first century. The strengthening and improvement of the international monitoring of human rights violations becomes particularly imperative today. We are also convinced that the use of force cannot be considered an adequate means of ensuring respect for human rights.

I wish to emphasize that adherence to, and the protection of, human rights became the key policy principle of my country. Ukraine has signed and ratified all basic international agreements in the field of human rights and put in place effective national mechanisms for the implementation of international norms in this field.

My delegation is pleased to note that commendable efforts have been undertaken to implement the Secretary-General's reform initiatives in the field of management and administration. This year, the General Assembly will be adopting the first biennial programme budget in a results-based format. Our delegation welcomes the introduction of results-oriented culture into the United Nations budgeting process. In our view, this represents a major step forward in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of its programme activities in their qualitative dimension.

In general, my delegation is satisfied with the thematic overview of the work of the Organization contained in the main parts of the report on that subject, which covers all the key areas in which the United Nations is mandated to conduct its activities.

Let me conclude by stressing again our continued support for the Secretary-General in his leadership and in his tireless efforts aimed at strengthening the United Nations, and by reiterating Ukraine's resolve to contribute actively to these efforts.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): We have in our hand the report of the Secretary-General issued at a trying and challenging time, as we are still recovering from the shock of destruction of lives and property, caused by attacks in New York, our host city, and Washington. Let me reiterate my delegation's heartfelt condolences for the victims of this tragedy and our sympathy for those who have lost their near and dear ones. We fully agree with the Secretary-General when he said, "The attack did not just target New York or the United States, but instead was a strike against the world and that is why we need to come together to fight terrorism." We look forward to another opportunity in the very near future to discuss this issue in depth.

We commend the initiative of the Secretary-General in presenting us with a comprehensive report and for providing a factual review of a wide range of activities undertaken by the United Nations in all vital areas during the year 2000-2001. The report holds special significance for us, since the period witnessed two major events organized under the auspices of the United Nations. The first was the historic Millennium Summit in September 2000, attended by the heads of State and Government of 147 countries, including Bangladesh. The leaders adopted the Millennium Declaration while pledging their support and commitment to making joint efforts to secure economic development with distributive justice.

The second event was the convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in May, 2001, in which Bangladesh played a leading and active role as the coordinator of the least developed countries, along with other countries. The conference adopted the declaration and the programme of action for the least developed countries for the decade 2001-2010.

The areas covered in the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization are important. However, due to the time constraints, I would like to focus my discussion on a few.

In the area of peace and security, the United Nations continued to deal with old festering conflicts, as well as new ones. These conflicts are sustained by war economies and by the ready availability of small arms and other weapons. They often have serious cross-border or regional implications. They are characterized by massive violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Their victims are mostly civilians, including women and children. In dealing with these conflicts, it was evident that United Nations' classic 'firefighting' role of the past was not enough.

Imbued with our commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security, Bangladesh has been promoting a comprehensive approach in dealing with threats to international peace and security during its ongoing membership of the Security Council. We pioneered the process of adoption of Security Council resolution 1366 (2001) on the prevention of armed conflict, based on the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General on the same subject. We are also fully aware that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have the larger share of responsibility in the prevention of armed conflict, and we are ready to contribute to their work.

The increasing demand on United Nations peacekeeping capabilities over the years pointed to two crying needs. First, the Organization needed to adequately equip, reorganize and reform its capacities, in other words, build effective structures to support United Nations peacekeeping operations. To this end, the report on United Nations peace operations was a landmark document, and Bangladesh supported its key recommendations. The other imperative was to suitably respond to the evolving nature of conflicts through suitable mandates for United Nations peace operations. Bangladesh has supported and contributed to the development of mandates, which increasingly are multidimensional in character. More and more, peacekeeping operations are designed to respond to the needs of child protection, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, human-rights monitoring, electoral assistance and so on. These civilian components of a peacekeeping operation now help build the much-needed link between peacekeeping and peace-building.

Global peace and security cannot be ensured in an environment of continued divergence of views between major nuclear-weapon States. The worst manifestation of this has been the stalemate prevailing in the Conference on Disarmament. The agreements reached during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remain unrealized, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is not yet in a position to enter into force. Global military expenditures continue to rise and low-cost small arms and light weapons are proliferating at an alarming rate, thereby sustaining conflicts and criminalizing societies. More committed efforts and innovative strategies are needed to meet the goals of the Millennium Declaration in this area.

No one would disagree that the most important war that the international community should wage is the one against extreme poverty. The call for that came out loud and clear in the pronouncements of the world's leaders during the Millennium Summit. In his report the Secretary-General rightly identified the issue of poverty as one of the most challenging. Bangladesh is encouraged by the commitment to make the right to development a reality for everyone. We feel that it would be essential for the Organization to follow a

rights-based approach to meet the United Nations strategy for halving extreme poverty.

In Bangladesh the United Nations has successfully completed the Common Country Assessment (CAA) and the Development Assistance Framework (DAF) for better and effective coordination between the United Nations and Government agencies. The CCA, which provides an assessment of the gap between the goals of the major United Nations conferences and the status of their implementation, will be a useful guide of the magnitude and nature of activities that may need to be undertaken to meet targets at both the domestic and international levels.

The third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was held in Brussels in May this year, was highly successful and was able to come out with the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action. We appreciate the views expressed by the Secretary-General that the Declaration reaffirms the collective responsibility of the international community to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity, and ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people.

The Conference's Programme of Action is different from all others in that it deals with the entire spectrum of development issues and its approach is based on commitments by the least developed countries and their development partners. Its effective implementation is the most important task before us, and the role of the United Nations in it is vital. We have on many occasions raised the issue that without the coordinated involvement of the whole United Nations system there will be little for the United Nations to achieve.

Our attention has been drawn to paragraph 145 of the report, where the Secretary-General observed that the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would lead the implementation of the Programme of Action. We understand that the Secretary-General made that reference in relation to issues of international trade in the Programme of Action, since many other areas are beyond the mandate and competence of UNCTAD. Since a full report of the Secretary-General has been requested in paragraph 116 of the Conference's Programme of Action — which we expect will contain his clear and comprehensive recommendations — we believe this observation could await the publication of that report.

The special situation of Africa with regard to the crisis in peace and development has been acknowledged in many international forums. Bangladesh has all along been very supportive of the various important initiatives taken by the United Nations to focus special attention on Africa. Some of those have been covered in the report. Given Africa's diversity and tremendous potential, and the recent expressions of political will by its leaders to take control of its own destiny, we believe that conditions have been created to move ahead on a wide range of African development issues. The continued involvement of the United Nations and the international community is essential to sustain the momentum and mobilize resources for African development.

The electoral assistance provided by the United Nations during the year under review has greatly facilitated democratic transition in a number of countries. We welcome the new focus on supporting institutions and stimulating local participation. An important effort has been deployed by the Electoral Assistance Division to coordinate the activities of foreign observers expected to monitor the forthcoming elections in Bangladesh, elections that are going to be conducted by the neutral, caretaker Government. We commend the assistance of the United Nations in empowering citizens in Member States to enjoy the power of democracy.

We recognize the efforts of the United Nations in bridging the gap between human rights norms and their implementation. Despite some progress, challenges remain in ensuring universal respect for human rights. Bangladesh is a party to all core human rights treaties. We feel there is continuing need for human and institutional capacity-building in developing countries in order to ensure implementation of the human rights treaties they have signed. This is an area where the United Nations should follow a needs-based approach, make a realistic assessment of the existing mechanism and target those countries needing infrastructure support.

The demands that Member States place on the United Nations, and the rapidly evolving environment in which the Organization has to operate to meet them, has left it no choice but to opt for serious

administrative and managerial reform. Continued support from the Member States in priority areas of reform is heartening, and Bangladesh welcomes that. The tight financial situation and the needs of the times have induced reform in respect of budgeting, programming, planning, procurement and human resources management. We have started seeing positive results. Yet, we believe that in a universal Organization like the United Nations, efficiency should not mean ignoring justified growth in its engagement.

For the past four biennia we have seen no growth in the United Nations budget; rather there has often been negative growth, which restricts the United Nations engagement, particularly in the area of the social and economic development of our peoples. We hope that when the next biennium budget is drafted, this critical aspect will be considered. We remain concerned at the non-payment of contributions, which affects the smooth running of the Organization. We once again urge Member States to pay their assessed contributions in time and in full.

The road ahead of us and our Organization cannot be easy, given the daunting objectives we set for ourselves in the Millennium Declaration. In the globalized world, the only way to go about meeting those objectives is to cooperate among us in partnership with civil society and the private sector. The report of the Secretary-General will be a useful guide for further action in various fields of activity undertaken by the United Nations. We again thank the Secretary-General for his efforts.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election to the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Given your consummate diplomatic skills and experience in leadership, my delegation has full confidence that you will be able to steer the General Assembly successfully. The outgoing President, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland, also deserves our profound appreciation for leading the fifty-fifth session of General Assembly in an exemplary manner.

We are delighted that Secretary-General Kofi Annan has been re-appointed to a second term, and extend to him our most sincere congratulations. He has been a great Secretary-General and I hope he will, without fear or favour, best his own performance in the second inning.

The United Nations arose, as some people like to say, from the ashes of the Second World War. Its lofty ideals and values, as enshrined in its Charter, found elaborate expression in the Millennium Declaration in the form of concrete goals and benchmarks, together with an outline of the process to be followed, which constitutes our marching orders and job description. The heads of State and Government have spoken of their vision. It is now the obligation of Member States and the United Nations to flesh it out and give it complete shape.

We need, as most of us have agreed many times, a stronger and a better equipped United Nations capable of playing a pivotal role in global affairs as the most representative and universal body for achieving our shared goals. We must therefore try to contribute to improving its performance to the best of our capacities. We believe this debate ought to be guided by that paramount purpose.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for a concise, comprehensive and informative report on the work of the Organization. I note several improvements, both in style and substance, in this year's report over that of last year's.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan deserves our profound tribute for his untiring efforts, with which he has tried to promote peace, stimulate development, foster the rule of law and strengthen the Organization. Under his leadership, the United Nations has become a forward-looking Organization willing to take proactive steps and to reach out. His annual report — in which he dwells on the spread of universal ideas and the challenges they face, on emerging problems and the insufficiency of existing structures to address them, and on thematic aspects of the work of the Organization — eloquently bears that out.

In taking stock we find that the United Nations has had a mixed bag of successes and failures over the period under review. Just as we celebrate its successes, we must also examine its failures. For instance, the democratic elections in East Timor, the withdrawal of Israel from south Lebanon, the improved situation in Kosovo, and the growing faith of many trouble-stricken States in the Organization reassure us of the United Nations continued utility for peoples around the world. Similarly, growing cooperation among the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and regional organizations

gives us reason to hope for better development performance in the future. Enhanced cooperation and coordination among humanitarian mechanisms, a slight decline in the refugee population, progress in the codification of international law and growing partnership between the United Nations and the private sector and civil society have substantially increased the capacity of the United Nations to deliver.

However, much remains to be done to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The world has not become more peaceful, nor has it prospered equitably, let alone evenly. The new political order, if one could call the new global power relations by that name, has lessened the super-Power stand-off and potential for nuclear annihilation, but has unleashed new threats that have rendered the world even more dangerous. The new economic order has presided over a period that witnessed some 66 countries growing poorer than they were a decade ago, while a few touched new heights of prosperity.

Countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe are embroiled in unfortunate conflicts that are now more internal than inter-State in nature. The Middle East is boiling over. International arms control treaties that provided strategic stability and a new sense of security are under threat. A new nuclear arms race — this time extending even to outer space — is on the verge of being touched off. Tension in many regions has reached new heights, sapping States of strength and resources that could otherwise be used to make a difference in their people's lives.

Globalization has unleashed opportunities for growth for the rich and misery for others — more riches for some and growing woes for others. It has globalized markets for the goods, services, capital and technology of rich countries. In tandem, it has brought crime, pollution, drugs, disease, refugees and speculation on a global scale, fracturing States, destabilizing economies and fraying the very social fabric in many nations. The information revolution, although promising, has widened the gap between rich and poor and is misused by many for undesirable purposes. We have the challenge of making globalization and the information revolution work for everybody around the world.

The Organization has not been able to live up to its mandate, let alone to the peoples' expectations. But I am confident, and many others have said it, that collectively we certainly have the knowledge, tools and resources to help the United Nations do it, provided there is vision and political will to that effect.

On questions of peace and security, we applaud the novel efforts of Secretary-General Kofi Annan to bring on board regional organizations to realize shared purposes. We must, however, make sure there is no conflict of interest. The United Nations leads and is not led by others, so that it does not remain a mere spectator when actions are being taken on its behalf. It should not be asked to clean up the mess when actions are over. A preventive step based on information and coordination among United Nations agencies would bring greater value for the United Nations money.

As the Brahimi Panel report bears witness, Member States and the United Nations have made serious mistakes in the past, at tremendous human cost. We need to internalize many of the useful recommendations the Brahimi Panel made to spruce of the work of the Organization in the field of peacekeeping. The Secretariat must develop — and I hope that it is trying to do so after the admonition of the Brahimi report — the habit of telling the Security Council what it needs know rather than what it wants to hear.

The scourge of terrorism has now become the most pressing concern for global peace. We are happy that the General Assembly is planning to hold a debate on this growing menace shortly. We hope that the draft convention on terrorism now on the anvil addresses all genuine concerns and takes its final shape quickly. The recent colossal loss of life and property we witnessed in the horrendous terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania makes the question of rooting out terrorism from the face of the Earth all the more urgent. The international community must take prompt and resolute measures. Nepal strongly condemns terrorism in all its manifestations and is willing to do its part to stamp it out.

Sanctions have adversely affected innocent people and third countries. The United Nations must find a way to mitigate such effects and to compensate the innocent third parties, if sanctions are to be effectively observed.

Development is an area where the Organization can do much as a facilitator and catalyst, but in which it has been least successful in delivering. There is no need for further reiteration here of the already

recognized causal relations between poverty and conflict and of how they fuel each other in a downward spiral. We must all try to implement the Millennium Declaration to trigger sustained growth, to reduce poverty, to preserve the environment, and to tackle problems like gender imbalance, illiteracy and diseases, including the HIV/AIDS epidemic. We welcome the outcome of the special session on HIV/AIDS and the establishment of a fund to deal with it.

In order to promote development we must work rigorously to meet official development assistance targets and deepen debt relief, as well as help developing countries to mobilize greater domestic and foreign investment and improve the mobilization of domestic resources and institutional capacities. In that process, there is a need for a prudent policy mix aimed at unleashing the creative energies of people and of a socially responsible private sector, as well as a need to enhance growth-friendly, innovative, productive efficiencies accompanied by distributive justice. The Secretary-General's idea of targeted attention to eradicate poverty is most welcome. The paradigmatic shift for development that the Secretary-General has suggested must be preceded by an adequate examination of the advantages and disadvantages inherent in new paradigms.

The United Nations must seek to further intensify and solidify its cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and other international and regional bodies to foster synergy for speedy development in developing countries. Regional and subregional mechanisms must be put to their fullest use. As we have seen so far, the inclusive preparatory process for the Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Mexico next year holds out considerable promise for better development performance ahead for the global community. My delegation will work with others towards the same modality for next year's World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in South Africa.

Nepal applauds Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his significant focus, in his report, on least developed countries — 34 out of 49 of which are located in Africa, making the United Nations Africa orientation welcome and appropriate. What struck my delegation most, if it is not mistaken, is that there is no mention whatever of the excruciating problems of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, some of which problems have consequences for their very existence. I would be happy to be proved wrong on this.

Nepal is worried about the increasingly low priority development is receiving in the United Nations structure. The declining staff strength, the dwindling core resources and the increasing threat to some of the development-oriented mechanisms within the system are some of the major concerns. Those steps already threaten that the Organization may go out of balance vis-à-vis its other activities.

The protection of children and other vulnerable groups in conflict and disaster and the plight of refugees are common concerns for us all. Nepal appreciates the efforts of the United Nations in those areas, particularly in helping to resolve refugee problems in many parts of the world, including the problem of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. An integrated approach to peacekeeping and human rights might help to bring synergy to the Organization's efforts in this area. The nudging of humanitarian agencies and programmes towards a pre-emptive and preventive role in likely conflict areas is welcome and requires further strengthening.

The vexing issue of humanitarian intervention, which was an emotionally charged subject of debate last year, has lost much of its impetus now, to the immense relief of most countries. Yet the imperative need to remove deep-seated hatreds and animosities, and concerted efforts to so, so that Rwanda is not repeated must remain our collective priority. We must continue tearing down the walls of hatred, building bridges and enhancing social harmony through participatory governance, economic development and distributive justice. The recent Conference on racism held in South Africa, though controversial to some extent, is a step forward in helping to promote a more discrimination-free world.

The United Nations has done much to improve its efficiency and pare its costs. We support the Secretary-General in those efforts, but more can be done to cut corners, to remove waste and to spruce up the Organization's performance. However, staff retrenchment alone, though essential where redundancy exists, will not suffice. We must stop politically motivated recruitment and promotion and make promotion more result-oriented and merit-based, yet representative and effective; streamline Headquarters

and field offices; reform financial rules and regulations; and equip the Organization with the latest management techniques and information technologies. These measures will be critical if the United Nations is to be a force attuned to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Nepal appreciates the Secretary-General's efforts to reach out to the private sector and civil society. Those efforts have begun to bear fruit, as the awe-inspiring contribution by private foundations and the corporate cooperation with United Nations initiatives bear out. At the same time, we would also caution that, while the Organization seeks synergy through wider cooperation, the core responsibilities must continue to remain its principal focus.

To conclude, my delegation commends and supports the Secretary-General for the good work he has been doing and for the leadership he has been providing. We also urge him to be more mindful of the needs and sensitivities of small and poor countries. Every country must feel connected and included; every concern of regional and global significance must find its proper place in the global agenda that the United Nations is entrusted to address. The Secretary-General's report must be a mirror image of the strengths and weaknesses of, and a tool for reform of, our cherished yet imperfect Organization.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization. We agree with much of the content of the report, and share the Secretary-General's analysis of the current global situation.

On the issue of peace and security, we commend the efforts of the Secretary-General to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We have always believed and advocated that prevention is better than cure and that preventing a conflict from breaking out is preferable to launching a peacekeeping operation after it has erupted. We also agree with his view that the United Nations should develop comprehensive and coherent conflict-prevention strategies involving the entire United Nations system.

We believe that with closer coordination between the Secretary-General and the Security Council, potential conflicts could be nipped in the bud before they become major flash-points. We would encourage more innovative and flexible approaches in the way the Council and the Secretary-General conduct their work so that they can be more proactive and effective in the area of conflict prevention.

We note that the Secretary-General has made a number of concrete recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system in conflict prevention, many of which should be supported. We strongly endorse his decision to continue dispatching fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions and his intention to start submitting periodic regional or subregional reports to the Security Council on disputes that may threaten international peace and security. We believe that his efforts to strengthen linkages and cooperation with regional organizations are practical and necessary steps in developing regional and subregional strategies in conflict prevention with the active involvement of those organizations. We welcome the efforts made by the Secretary-General to improve the Secretariat's capacity and resource base for preventive action.

On the issue of peacekeeping, my delegation has strongly supported many of the practical recommendations contained in the Brahimi report. We look forward to their early and effective implementation. We hope that the new and expanded mechanism of consultations with troop-contributing countries recommended in the report, and recently embodied in Security Council resolution 1353 (2001), will be effectively utilized by the Security Council and troop-contributing countries.

While the matter was not directly addressed in the report, international terrorism is clearly an issue that is pertinent in any discussion on peace and security; not only because of the recent horrific terrorist attacks against the United States, but also because terrorist attacks against innocent civilians is a common feature of many conflict situations, whether in Africa or Asia. While the terrorist acts against the United States must be condemned in the strongest possible terms, and every effort made to bring the perpetrators to justice, an international strategy to deal with this threat must be comprehensive and based on an in-depth and objective analysis of the factors that provoked such violence. This is important if we are to effectively combat the menace and prevent its recurrence.

Such a strategy must involve the whole of the international community, which should extend its fullest cooperation to global efforts to stamp out this

scourge. Such efforts must also involve the indispensable role of the United Nations. Unilateral measures or measures undertaken by a coalition of the willing, however coordinated and resourceful, will have their failings or shortcomings. Only the United Nations will provide the necessary legitimacy for the measures that may need to be taken to combat this menace at the global level.

In the area of disarmament, like the Secretary-General we are disappointment at the low level of international cooperation on the issue. The continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament is a matter of serious concern and great dismay to my delegation. We would strongly urge the three Special Coordinators designated by the Conference on Disarmament to make every effort to break the impasse and move the negotiations forward. For as long as nuclear weapons exist, we cannot afford to be complacent, particularly against the heightened risks of nuclear terrorism.

My delegation shares the Secretary-General's concern over the plans to deploy national missile defences, which will inevitably threaten not only current bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements but also ongoing and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We strongly believe that the multilateral search for genuine measures towards legally binding, irreversible and verifiable disarmament agreements must remain the highest priority of the global disarmament agenda. We earnestly hope that the United Nations can play a more significant role in moving the global disarmament process forward.

While the report made no reference to it, the historic decision in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons was a major and positive development in the campaign for nuclear disarmament, and a significant contribution by the world Court in the area of nuclear disarmament. Malaysia and other like-minded countries will continue with efforts to follow-up actions to the advisory opinion of the Court at this and in future sessions of the General Assembly.

On the issue of small arms and light weapons, the Programme of Action adopted at the end of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July this year, marked a significant step towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. What remains is for States to fulfil their respective obligations under the Programme of Action. Malaysia believes that the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be viewed from a holistic perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace-building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. In the context of conflict situations, the problem should be seen comprehensively in the framework of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

The Secretary-General has alluded to the "serious moral dilemma" faced by the United Nations with regard to the issue of sanctions, which clearly undermines the credibility of the United Nations. Instead of fighting on the side of the vulnerable and weak, the United Nations stands accused of promoting the suffering of an entire population under sanctions. The deplorable humanitarian crisis in Iraq is testimony to that. The continuing dire plight of the Iraqi people, in spite of the United Nations oil-for-food humanitarian programme, has prompted some concerned people in the West to describe the policy as "infanticide masquerading as policy".

That is indeed a strong indictment of the current international stance on Iraq. Those highly responsible people must have had a reason for making that accusation. They must have been moved by reports on the plight of the Iraqi people such as, for instance, a study by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on the devastating impact of the sanctions on children, which estimated that, since 1991, about 5,000 children per month do not survive beyond the age of five. Surely, we cannot be unmoved by the enormity of the problem.

Malaysia is concerned at not only the profound socio-economic effects of the sanctions on Iraqi society, but also about the political and psychological scars that will be left on an entire generation of Iraqis. Malaysia has repeatedly called for a restructuring of the sanctions regime and for de-linking humanitarian efforts from military sanctions, leading to an early lifting of the sanctions. At the same time, Malaysia has consistently called for Iraqi cooperation for the early resolution of the Kuwaiti issues, namely, a full accounting covering the more than 600 missing persons and the return of the national archives and other property taken out of the country. In that regard, Iraq's resumption of cooperation with the Tripartite

Commission and its technical subcommittee would be a positive and welcome step in the context of the fulfilment of its international obligations. We would strongly encourage the Secretary-General to continue his dialogue with Iraq in spite of the lack of progress so far.

Malaysia also renews its call to lift the sanctions on Libya and Sudan, as they no longer serve their purposes.

We laud the Secretary-General's call for a major global campaign in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. We welcome the decision he has taken to establish a high-level inter-agency task force on HIV/AIDS — comprising all the relevant funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations — to strengthen United Nations coordination in addressing this grave issue.

While Africa is currently the continent most profoundly affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS, we must devote equal attention to the alarming increase in infections in other parts of the world, as rightly pointed out in the report. The impending epidemic in Asia might surpass anything yet to be seen if we fail to stem the rapid spread of the virus. We are also concerned at the prohibitive prices of life-saving and life-prolonging drugs, partly due to trade and patent-related issues. It is therefore important for the developing countries to secure access to drugs at affordable prices and at the same time to recognize that further research and development is needed to find a cure.

On sustainable development, we look forward to participating in the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in September next year to undertake a 10-year review of the progress made in the implementation of Agenda 21. We support the call by the Secretary-General for greater participation by all major stakeholders to provide substantive inputs to the preparatory process of the Summit.

The implementation of Agenda 21 must be the responsibility of all. The capacity of the developing countries for sustainable development must not be diminished by conditionalities imposed on them, for instance on trade and investment. Sustainable development can be pursued only on the basis of genuine partnership and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The development elements of Agenda 21 must be given utmost priority to enable the developing countries to develop their capacity to deal with environmental issues. Clearly, this requires a renewed political commitment from the developed countries on the full implementation of Agenda 21 in order to strengthen the linkages between poverty eradication and sustainable development. It is important to ensure that the Johannesburg conference does not result in the further erosion of the commitments made at Rio.

On the issue of climate change, we support the Secretary-General's call for the early signing and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by all States. We hope that the Protocol will come into force by 2002, despite the absence of others. We wish to commend those developed States that reaffirmed their commitments to upholding the Protocol in spite of recent setbacks.

We hope that the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development will produce a concrete and definitive plan of action in addressing the needs of the developing countries, particularly in Africa and least developed countries elsewhere. It should not be a Conference that merely revisits the broad goals of development; it should address the need for financing for development and the challenges faced by developing countries. We hope that the Conference will also address the serious issue of capacity-building on the part of the poorer of the developing countries, particularly with respect to infrastructure-building, without which they will not be able to fully partake in the globalization process.

Poverty eradication should continue to remain a major issue on the international agenda. My delegation commends the objective of reducing by half the number of people living in poverty by 2015, but this will require, among other things, lasting debt relief to the poorest countries. While mindful of the primary responsibility of national Governments in eradicating poverty, the international community must also recognize the incapability of the least developed countries to do it on their own, without continued financial and technical support from the international community. To enable them to fully participate in the increasingly globalized economy, it is essential to ensure stable and well-managed international financial and trading systems, including increased market access for their products.

With reference to the notion of the sovereignty of the people, as contained in paragraph 5 of the report, we should be clear as to what it precisely means and that it does not undermine the principle of the sovereignty of States. We should not lose sight of the fact that the State is responsible for the welfare of its people and that it is its prime responsibility and duty to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is imperative therefore that this Organization, which is made up of sovereign States, continue to uphold the principle of the sovereignty of States — which, inter alia, is the raison d'être of the United Nations — even as it upholds and promotes good governance and the rights of individuals and communities. An erosion of this fundamental principle will weaken the Organization itself.

We commend the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Organization to provide humanitarian assistance to the vulnerable. We urge the Organization and its agencies to continue in these efforts in order to alleviate the pain and suffering of peoples around the world due to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies. In these efforts, we should pay singular tribute to the legions of humanitarian workers around the world who put aside personal comforts to serve humanity in crisis situations, sometimes at great personal risk to themselves. In the wake of the increasing attacks on these humanitarian workers, which must be strongly condemned, it is important that measures be taken to ensure their safety. My delegation has, on a number of occasions in the past, suggested the idea of this Organization's giving due recognition to the contributions made by humanitarian workers, some of whom have made the ultimate sacrifice. Given the importance of their work, it is only fitting that the United Nations honour them in the way that it honours its peacekeepers.

On management reform within the Organization, we would encourage this work in progress to continue, particularly in three priority areas — human resources, information technology policy and the capital master plan — all of which will contribute to the overall efforts to enhance the Organization's effectiveness, efficiency and relevance. We would welcome other reform initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General in the interest of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the Organization.

While the report highlights some improvements in the Organization's accountability and oversight management, we are disappointed to note that the current financial situation of the United Nations remains precarious. It is regrettable that a number of major contributors have still not paid their assessed contributions. As a result of late or non-payment, the United Nations has to continue with the practice of borrowing from a depleting peacekeeping account.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to commend the Department of Public Information for its efforts in disseminating important information on the activities and programmes of the Organization, which is so essential in promoting a positive image of and continuing support for the Organization. We commend the Department for upgrading its services and welcome the recent innovations made, including the e-mail news alert system, which is not only useful in times of emergency but also keeps the United Nations up to date with the latest techniques in communications technology.

I had intended to refer to the serious situation in the Middle East, which is of serious concern to my delegation, but because of time constraints, I will defer it to another occasion, when we will deal substantively with the issue.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this challenging session. My delegation is convinced that, under your skilful guidance, we will be successful in our work and deliberations. Our congratulations and best wishes go to the other members of the Bureau as well.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his annual report on the work of the Organization, which covers a broad range of its activities during the past year. We, the Member States, are considering this report in a new and specific political environment, marked by the recent terrorist attacks on New York, the United States and humanity as a whole. Their consequences will, whether we like it or not, directly influence our debates. At this difficult time, it is important for us to be realistic and to have a clear picture of where we stand, of the main problems we are facing and of how we intend to address them.

The questions of peace and security obviously represent the greatest and most important tasks before us, and before our Organization. The frustration that

we feel over the postponement of the general debate, for security reasons, should only reinforce our determination to cope with the peace and security of the contemporary world in a more efficient manner. It is not a victory for terrorists; rather, it is the beginning of their end. In this respect, my Government cordially welcomes the decision to hold a debate on the issue of terrorism in the General Assembly next week.

Coming back to the Secretary-General's report, we fully support the recommendations of the Brahimi report and those of the Secretary-General in his endeavours to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. It is commendable that peacekeeping mandates have already been extended to previously unthinkable areas, such as assisting local authorities in strengthening national institutions. However, we still lag behind in addressing the root causes of conflicts and their recurrence. In creating a peaceful environment more conducive to the prevention of the occurrence and recurrence of conflicts, we need tighter links between relevant segments of the United Nations system, such as its development and humanitarian agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, and better coordination between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

This brings me to the other important task, to which we have to give more impetus: the reform of the Security Council. The political environment of the twenty-first century requires adaptations on the part of that highly important body so that it can be the efficient guardian of peace in the world. We can only regret that sufficient political consensus to make significant progress in this respect has still not been achieved. While the current practice of opening the Security Council to non-members through practical measures is a process that we certainly welcome, it is nevertheless too slow and too limited in scope to replace the Security Council's comprehensive reform.

We would like to commend the work undertaken by the United Nations and other sister agencies in the field of natural-disaster response. However, what is again lacking here is prevention. Every year, because of deteriorating environmental conditions, we are faced with more numerous natural disasters, stronger in their appearance and harsher in their devastation than ever before. It is therefore imperative to examine the means of improving coordination of humanitarian assistance, while at the same time addressing the root causes of increased occurrences of natural disasters, by broadly adopting and strictly implementing international treaties for the protection of the environment.

The right to development and the eradication of poverty are some of the noble goals we have set forth in the Millennium Declaration. Yet what is the present level of our achievements? It definitely does not seem that we are on the right track. The world economy is on the brink of recession, threatening the prospects of developmental assistance. Furthermore, the Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, in Brussels, has clearly indicated that the situation in most of them is far from improving. Quite the contrary, for many of them the situation at the beginning of the new millennium is worse than it was before. Obviously, an immense workload lies in front of us if we want to reach at least the most fundamental millennium goal: to halve by the year 2015 the number of people seriously suffering from hunger. By that time, the world economy is going to have its further ups and downs, but we should keep in mind that, while a temporary decrease in the value of stocks represents a major economic concern, a decrease in food for those starving simply means death.

We are encouraged by significant developments in the field of international human rights law, such as the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Progress has also been made with the adoption of the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Broader acceptance of United Nations norms in the field of human rights by Member States leads towards the globalization of human rights and hopefully towards a universally recognized international code of human rights. However, bridging the gap between human rights norms and their implementation continues to pose a substantial challenge. The work of the six United Nations bodies on human rights treaties continues to provide an important framework for monitoring their national implementation.

This year's developments in the sphere of international criminal justice, primarily the beginning of the trial against Milosevic and the growing number of States adhering to the International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute, strengthen our belief that we are witnessing a forging of a new international legal order. With the establishment of the ICC now in sight, we remain optimistic that soon we will be able not only to

punish, but also to prevent the most atrocious international crimes. Leaders all over the world have been sent a clear message that they are accountable and that the most basic human rights are universal and internationally protected.

The report under our review clearly indicates that globalization is a process that decisively marks the times we are living in. Not only are our economy and trade globalized, but also our problems, such as the nuclear threat, refugees, environmental degradation, AIDS, organized crime and terrorism. It is obvious that through globalization we have become so mutually interdependent that we can successfully solve our most difficult problems only by working together. Concerted, multilateral efforts, accompanied by the strong political will of all Member States, are preconditions for winning the key battles of the twenty-first century and the third millennium.

The United Nations represents the only forum that can address these global challenges in all their complexity and provide mechanisms for acting together in a coordinated manner. The most serious of these challenges are very different from those that our predecessors could have imagined when they founded the United Nations more than half a century ago. That is why the reform of the Organization is imperative, and why we fully support the Secretary-General in his endeavours. We should like to stress that we should extend our debate on the reform of the Security Council and revitalization of the work of the General Assembly to include the reform and revitalization of the Economic and Social Council as well. We believe that the further strengthening of the Economic and Social Council could be achieved through its transformation into a year-round working body, using improved working methods.

Finally, I would like to conclude by saying that just a year ago, our fascination with the arrival of the twenty-first century and the third millennium was reflected in the Millennium Declaration. Today, we are aware that the twenty-first century and the new millennium will be nothing more than what we make of them. Whether this is a pessimistic or an optimistic statement depends solely upon us, the peoples.

Mr. Schori (Sweden): Mr. President, Sweden congratulates you on your election. We have great confidence in your ability to guide us through this session of the General Assembly. You can count on our full support in your important task.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General upon his re-election. His first term of office has been characterized by tremendous progress for the Organization. We are confident that his leadership will prove to be equally effective and successful in the coming years.

The horror of the recent terrorist attacks will not be forgotten by anybody in this Hall. The United Nations has reacted swiftly and forcefully in response to the heinous acts and the resulting tragedies. The international community must now continue to work closely together and use the multilateral institutions as a common platform for action. These acts of terror constitute yet another challenge to mankind and make multilateralism and the work of the United Nations more important than ever.

In that regard, I should like to stress the importance of the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The Rome Statute opens a new chapter in international law that will certainly affect the conduct of States but that, more important, will guide and shape the behaviour of individuals.

Turning to the topic of today's debate, we thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the work of the Organization. Many achievements were made in the past year; the most significant was, no doubt, the Millennium Declaration. Sweden attaches great importance to its implementation. The follow-up should draw upon existing mechanisms and processes while maintaining an integrated approach in order to preserve the comprehensive character of the Declaration.

Sweden supports the strengthening and revitalization of the United Nations system. The reform of the Security Council calls for our continued attention. An important task ahead will be to pursue the reform of peacekeeping, not least its financial aspects. The recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping provide a good basis for further progress. Continued discussion of the Secretary-General's report on prevention of armed conflict, to address the root causes of any conflict, is another priority issue for my delegation.

Last year an important step was taken to improve the financial situation of the United Nations through

the General Assembly's agreement on the scale of assessments. During this session we will have to reach an agreement on the programme budget for 2002-2003 that enables the United Nations to carry out its mandated activities. We call on all Member States to pay their assessed contributions on time, in full and without conditions.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles remains a threat to mankind. In his message to the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency last week, the Secretary-General stressed that progress in the areas of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament is more important than ever in the aftermath of the appalling terrorist attack on the United States. He is right. It is imperative that we build on the success of last year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the basis of an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals. We must consolidate the NPT outcome and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Nuclear testing should belong to the past, and the upcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will give an opportunity for the world to confirm this. Deep cuts in strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals are long overdue.

The problems caused by destabilizing accumulations and the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons warrant our most serious attention. The easy access to and the flow of small arms contribute to the escalation of conflicts and tend to prolong them. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York this summer, was the starting point for a process to which all States must contribute on the global, regional and national levels.

Achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed development targets remains one of our greatest and most urgent challenges for the years to come. Poverty is an enemy of peace and democracy. Two important conferences at the highest political level will take place next year, of direct relevance in that regard. The International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Mexico in March, offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity to bring together national and international, public and private actors from the economic, financial and trade fields for the mobilization and effective use of resources to the benefit of development. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg a few months later, the international community will for the first time address all aspects of sustainable development in an integrated fashion, linking its economic, social and environmental dimensions. The outcome of those two endeavours must be substantial, meaningful, practical and concrete. We welcome the continued personal involvement of the Secretary-General in the further preparation of those summits, and we emphasize the need for high-level political leadership in the processes ahead.

As we close the books on the work of the Organization at the previous session, we all have reason to be proud of the positive results. In the same spirit of cooperation and flexibility, we must now address the tasks ahead of us with even more urgency.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Sir, the Moroccan delegation expresses its pleasure at seeing you presiding over the work of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, whose opening was unfortunately tarnished by the unconscionable terrorist acts that destroyed thousands of families, especially in our host city, a cradle of multilateralism and a symbol of coexistence among the many ethnic, cultural and religious components of the American nation. My delegation will have the opportunity next week to participate in the Assembly's deliberations on formulating an effective international response to terrorism, the newest threat to international peace and security.

My delegation thanks the Secretary-General for the illuminating introduction of his report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1), which we have studied with great interest.

This year's debate on the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is of special importance. It will enable us to arrive at conclusions that will contribute to future action to strengthen multilateral efforts in many spheres of the Organization's activities.

The first thing one takes away from a reading of the report is the impressive work of the Organization wherever international peace and security are threatened. The report also serves as a balance sheet of the work of the Organization over the past year and a

check-list of the difficulties and obstacles that hamper United Nations action. It also contains proposals which we shall have to discuss and decide upon.

It properly devotes special attention to Africa, many of whose subregions unfortunately continue to suffer the consequences of war and instability. Here, Morocco welcomes the cooperation that has been inaugurated between the United Nations and African regional organizations in the implementation of peacekeeping operations in Africa. We view that as an effective way to ensure the success of such operations.

But, as the Secretary-General rightly recalls,

> "The international community should be conscious, however, that efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity cannot become a justification for reduced engagement in the continent". (*A/56/1, para. 49*)

As a contributor to various peacekeeping operations on our continent and elsewhere, Morocco is aware of the importance of this solidarity and international commitment, which to a large extent determines the impact of these operations on national reconciliation and regional stability.

My country has been following with great interest the initiatives launched by the Secretary-General in Africa to strengthen the continent's capacity to contribute to the resolution of conflict situations and to prevent their deterioration and resurgence.

In that connection, my country particularly supports the suggestions to dispatch to the regions where the situation is very unstable interdisciplinary investigative and confidence-building missions. Regional observers in certain parts of our African continent may be extremely valuable for the maintenance of peace and the prevention of new sources of tension.

In that context, my country endorses the proposal to open a United Nations West Africa office that would be mandated to strengthen the United Nations capacity for monitoring, early warning and conflict prevention in the subregion.

We are prepared to support this initiative and to contribute to its success because it is important for us that our West African brothers experience a return of stability that would make it possible for them to devote themselves fully to economic development and respond to the needs of their people.

Experience has shown that, if it is to succeed, a peacekeeping operation must not only be confined to establishing a ceasefire. It must also ensure the promotion of a political dialogue between the various protagonists; otherwise, its impact will be lessened because the causes of instability will not have been addressed.

Therefore, it is a real peace-building strategy, as the Secretary-General mentioned in his report, that the African continent most needs. This strategy requires that a dialogue must be begun among all the parties involved in a conflict or in a regional dispute. This dialogue should be supported by the Secretary-General, who should bring the parties closer together by submitting appropriate proposals and making available the necessary expertise and logistics.

Of course, rapprochement, dialogue and consultation must be at the very core of preventive diplomacy when the dangers of a confrontation emerge, in order to break the chain that leads to violence.

On the other hand, this strategy also implies accompanying measures such as the allocation of emergency humanitarian assistance, the establishment of micro-projects that could provide basic indispensable services, stabilize refugees and displaced persons, disarm and resettle combatants and finally make available to the affected populations basic essential services that would make it possible for them to resume their lives in society and to participate in the reconstruction of their cities, regions or countries.

Concerted action at the subregional and regional levels is, of course, necessary to combat and eliminate the illicit arms trade, particularly of small arms, and the interaction between arms trafficking and trafficking in raw materials that finances it.

The active contribution of economic organizations and international financial institutions is welcome across the board to provide the necessary expertise that would make it possible to confront the multiple challenges for overcoming crises.

We are pleased to note that the prevention function continues to be at the heart of Mr. Kofi Annan's concerns, who would like to establish, I repeat once again, a culture of prevention within the international community. This culture entails the

implementation of confidence-building measures, the promotion of genuine good neighbourliness and the establishment of mechanisms of sustainable bilateral and subregional cooperation geared towards interdependence, which guarantees common economic and social development.

It is this conviction which has underpinned my country's action in its inter-African relations, and it is the same conviction that encourages us in our quest for revitalizing the structures of the Arab Maghreb Union, on which the common future of the States of our subregion and the success of the European Mediterranean Partnership depend, because the Maghreb is at the crossroads between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe.

In that connection, allow me to note that, unfortunately, the representative of Algeria has again this morning qualified the Secretary-General's initiatives aimed at a lasting peace in the Maghreb as being "reprehensibly frivolous". We regret this inappropriate language at a time when all the parties, including Algeria, should focus on the negotiations initiated by the Security Council on the basis "of the draft framework agreement on the status of the Western Sahara".

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.